

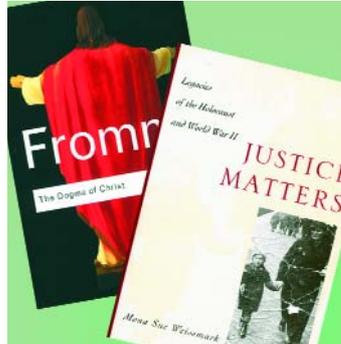
BOOK REVIEWS

If you would like to review a book for *The Psychologist*, contact Mike Thompson on mictho@bps.org.uk. Publishers should send advance title information and books for possible review to *The Psychologist* at the Leicester address.

Can good people be cruel and destructive?

THESE two disturbing books plead for an active political psychology – empirical and theoretical. *Justice Matters* asks ‘Can good people pursue heinous ends?’ *The Dogma of Christ*, a reissued collection of Erich Fromm’s essays, explores the ‘essential motivation for the depth and intensity of cruelty and destructiveness’. Both integrate insights from politics, religion and psychoanalysis.

Weissmark imaginatively describes what happened when children of Holocaust survivors met children of active Nazis and had to come to terms emotionally with their own and the other group’s pasts. The groups saw their parents’ world as embodying



‘two staggeringly different truths’ from which the children could only painfully free themselves. She found a similar ‘chasm of

The Dogma of Christ

ERICH FROMM

LONDON: ROUTLEDGE CLASSICS; 2004; Pb £8.99 (ISBN 0 415 8999 8)

Justice Matters: Legacies of the Holocaust and World War II

MONA SUE WEISSMARK

OXFORD: OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS; 2004; Hb £14.99 (ISBN 0 9 515757 5)

REVIEWED BY Leonard Bloom

shame and vengeance’ worldwide from Ireland to Africa. My South African experience suggests that a politically and ideologically committed nation *can* emerge from the chasm. Both writers largely agree that the root of destructiveness is not motivational but ideological. People live by their beliefs about the nature of their worlds. How are beliefs constructed and justified? How are they confronted, denied or destroyed? How is the idea of a ‘common humanity’ denied and destroyed?

The books are complementary, agreeing that few people are ‘evil monsters’ with evil dispositions, but many are ready to be obedient bureaucrats or executioners and are otherwise ‘normal’. Sociocultural, political and ideological influences motivate evil acts. Any dogmatic belief is therefore dangerous.

Neither book, nor Milgram’s work, deals with the deeper motivations and social psychology of dissent. Who oppose the ideologies and fantasies that support human destructiveness, and how do they do it? Both books underrate the crucial problems: Why do some people reject the values of the world in which they are ‘embedded’? Why do people choose values of an alien world?

Weissmark concludes that legally redressing persecution and injustice is inadequate. It fails to heal the emotional damage and leaves the unresolved wish for revenge to be passed on to the survivors’ children.

Both books are uncomfortably relevant to the fundamental issues about human motivation.

■ Leonard Bloom is Visiting Fellow, Fort Hare University, South Africa.

DEVELOPING DIAGNOSES



Developmental Problems of Childhood and Adolescence: Prevention, Treatment and Training

MARTIN HERBERT

OXFORD: BPS BLACKWELL; 2005; Pb £24.95 (ISBN 1 4051 1592 0)

REVIEWED BY Lucy Brown-Wright

THIS book offers a whistle-stop tour of developmental disorders, with each problem being structured around a developmental stage from conception to teenage years. Diagnosis, clinical and developmental features are considered alongside cause and intervention.

The coverage is impressively inclusive, and Herbert works hard to integrate physical, developmental and psychological influences to developmental problems. Whilst there is an attempt to integrate theoretical perspectives, it is predominantly guided by psychiatric diagnoses. The integral systems surrounding the child are somewhat peripheral in parts. However, one can argue that the reliance on diagnoses also serves as a strength, allowing a sound synopsis of a broad range of problems.

The book is aimed at postgraduate trainees and qualified practitioners. It is particularly well placed amongst those entering the field with its comprehensive overview and empirical basis. The sections on service provision and care-plan formulation may prove especially useful. The material may be perceived as

somewhat reductive for those more experienced practitioners, but nevertheless acts as a comprehensive refresher guide.

If I were to quibble, the depth of coverage is inconsistent and the rationale for some disorders having more extensive write-ups is unclear. There is a strong synopsis on conduct disorders, as one would expect given Herbert’s expertise. However, specific areas receive little or no mention. This includes developmental dyspraxia, which is signposted but not considered, and bipolar depression, which is becoming increasingly recognised. There is a rather short section on cognitive-behavioural approaches, with key figures receiving no mention at all.

All in all, this book undoubtedly offers a comprehensive consideration of a broad range of developmental disorders. It acts as a good introduction for those entering the field, and a refresher for those familiar with this area.

■ Dr Lucy Brown-Wright is a clinical psychologist at Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children, London.

Developing understanding of Asperger's syndrome

LEVENTHAL-BELFER and Coe provide us with a resource that introduces both the diagnosis of Asperger's syndrome and the frequent experiences of parents of children with Asperger's syndrome. This includes both potential misconceptions and strategies that may be helpful to children with the disorder; for example, they suggest a useful way for parents to introduce their child to new peers.

Beyond the diagnostic information and guidance offered, the authors stress the importance of understanding a child's behaviour as an individual, before implementing plans to change the behaviour. The book explicitly warns against modifying behaviour prior to understanding it.

This book is written in a style that captures the reader immediately and encourages them to continue reading. The authors have a unique emphasis in that they explain the abilities of children with Asperger's syndrome in terms of their talents rather than emphasising the difficulties they experience.



Asperger's Syndrome in Young People

LAURIE LEVENTHAL-BELFER & CASSANDRA COE

LONDON: JESSICA KINGSLEY; 2004; Pb £15.95

(ISBN 1 843 10 748 1)

Different Minds: Gifted Children with AD/HD, Asperger Syndrome, and Other Learning Deficits

DEIRDRE V. LOVECKY

LONDON: JESSICA KINGSLEY; Pb £16.95 (ISBN 1 85302 964 5)

REVIEWED BY **Joanne Steward**

Lovecky's book is one of the few of its kind. The writer discusses learning difficulties, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and Asperger's syndrome, alongside issues related to being 'gifted'. Lovecky states the importance of working with both elements of a person's makeup: '...a person cannot be viewed separate from his or her giftedness.' Lovecky writes with a real sense of compassion for the individuals and addresses the isolation often experienced by those presenting with such difficulties.

Although this book isn't as easy to read from the outset, persevere! It provides a

thorough understanding of the disorders in a comprehensive way. Through the use of case studies and examples, it enables you to take the information away with you.

I would recommend both texts for their individual merits: Leventhal-Belfer and Coe for its accessibility to be read by a wide audience, and Lovecky for its depth. My personal preference is Lovecky – I have a much greater understanding of the conditions as a result of reading the book.

■ *Joanne Steward is an assistant psychologist at Ashworth Hospital, Merseyside.*

Trauma and dissociation

ALTHOUGH a high prevalence of physical symptoms has been recognised among those with diagnosed dissociative disorders, Nijenhuis's book is the first work to bring them into the domain of dissociation. This is a scholarly work in an area where, I believe, serious research and study is long overdue. Nijenhuis proposes that many medically inexplicable somatic phenomena are symptoms of dissociative disorders. Furthermore, he proposes that using a screening tool that assesses for somatisation greatly enhances the diagnostic accuracy for dissociative disorders, particularly when used alongside other assessment tools that focus on psychoform dissociation.

The book is in two parts. The first describes dissociation from the perspective of the pioneer French psychologist Pierre Janet (who stressed involvement of both body and mind in the phenomenon of dissociation), and provides a means of measuring this construct (the Somatoform Dissociation Questionnaire) along with

Somatoform Dissociation: Phenomena, Measurement, and Theoretical Issues

ELLERT R.S. NIJENHUIS

NEW YORK: NORTON; 2004; Pb £15.99 (ISBN 0 393 70460 2)

REVIEWED BY **Nel Walker**

a thorough presentation of the reliability and validity of this measure so far. A clear correlation is established between dissociative disorders and early experiences of severe trauma, and between psychological dissociative symptoms and physically inexplicable somatic symptoms.

The second part includes fascinating chapters exploring the links between dissociative symptoms, both psychoform and somatoform, and instinctive animal defensive reactions.

The author presents with clarity and humility how far he believes the research results can be relied upon, and where further work needs to be done. He also includes correspondence published in the *British Journal of Psychiatry* between himself and H. Merskey, a psychiatrist

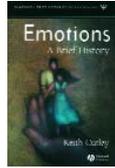
who asserts that dissociative disorders and somatoform dissociation are the effects of indoctrination by therapists. Altogether, there is plenty of stimulating discussion and suggestions for further research.

I believe this to be a very important book in the field of trauma and dissociation. Its thesis challenges the mental health community to re-examine the often marginalised field of the dissociative disorders. And I believe that the author puts the study of dissociative disorders firmly into the arena of evidence-based, scientific and mainstream consideration.

■ *Nel Walker is a psychotherapist in private practice in London and St Albans, specialising in trauma and dissociation.*

Novel approach to the history of emotions

OATLEY draws on material from a range of disciplines, providing a thorough historical account of work involving emotions. All of the main topics concerned with the study of emotions are included, such as the work of Darwin and of theorists like MacLean. It is a detailed, interesting and informative text, providing a great insight into the role and importance of emotions throughout history.



Emotions: A Brief History

KEITH OATLEY

OXFORD: BLACKWELL; 2004; Pb £12.99 (ISBN 1 4051 1315 4)

REVIEWED BY **Faye Horsley**

Anyone expecting to read a scientific text, however, might be disappointed with some of the content; it does not focus on providing an analysis of the theoretical and empirical work completed to date on emotions and the impact this has had on this area of study, rather it is written in the style of a novel. Indeed, a substantial amount of the book involves detailed analysis of the work of literary greats such as Shakespeare and Keats, as well as more recent writers, and how emotions are portrayed in their work. The relevance and necessity of exploring this in such detail is questionable, I thought, and it sometimes results in the chapter's focus being lost.

Oatley does appear to chop and change from presenting anthropological and historical accounts in depth, to analyses of literary works, to a discussion of the complex neuropsychological and biological

mechanisms involved in the experience and perception of human emotions. The writing style also alternated throughout the book from analytical to journalistic. It is this diversity that gives the book a lack of cohesion. There appears to be no logic in the sequence of chapters, and it is not always clear what Oatley is hoping to achieve.

The themes explored in this book are complex at times, making it difficult to read and understand. It would not be ideal as an introductory text, and perhaps have more appeal to an academic with prior knowledge of the area. However, in terms of content, the book could have some appeal to readers with an interest in literature or the social sciences.

■ *Faye Horsley is with Psychological Services, Ashworth Hospital, and at the University of Central Lancashire.*

Family Therapy: A Constructive Framework.

RODGER LOWE

LONDON: SAGE; 2004; Pb £17.99

(ISBN 0 7619 430 3)

REVIEWED BY **Andrea Davies**

A CONSTRUCTIVE framework to family therapy is very much a consultative model: 'How can I be helpful to you?' In keeping with this philosophy, Lowe avoids a prescriptive stance by encouraging the reader to take what they consider to be helpful. A précis of the therapist's role includes offering expertise without the expert, focusing on solutions and resilience and ensuring that sessions are co-constructed and negotiated, in order to evoke conversations about change.

The book is aimed at clinicians, for whom the balance between theory and practice is ideal. Case material and example questions are presented alongside enough theory to awaken your internal supervisor. On reading these sections, I was reminded of my own clinical work, and able to reflect on why I did what I did. Of particular interest is the section exploring the processes involved when we draw from theoretical concepts outside our model of choice. Clinical psychology boasts its eclecticism, yet do we really think about how we integrate different frameworks and at what point in the proceedings?

This book produced some timely thoughts for my own clinical practice, where the standardised assessment of the care planning approach is just commencing. How do we best balance gathering the information required for these forms with allowing clients to tell *their story their way*?

■ *Dr Andrea Davies is with Bro Morgannwg NHS Trust.*

Beauty in mind

EDWARD De Bono aims to help you develop a beautiful mind – one that is attractive to others as well as yourself, a mind that is beautiful in action and not in thoughts alone. Does he succeed?

The book is easy to navigate with clearly marked sections – 'How to agree', 'How to disagree', and so on – which allows the book to be dipped into and returned to again and again, rather than just read once through. And De Bono uses many personal examples to give practical meaning to the techniques discussed.

Another plus point is that the reader can practise some of the techniques using the exercises scattered throughout. For example in 'How to be interesting', What would you say to make frogs, airports or chewing gum interesting? Or in 'Concepts', how would you pick out the different concepts in hotels, shoes or telephones? In addition to techniques to make thinking and conversations more beautiful, De Bono explores techniques of how to disagree more beautifully. He argues that the war

How to Have a Beautiful Mind

EDWARD DE BONO

LONDON: VERMILION; 2004; Pb £8.99

(ISBN 0 09 189460 3)

REVIEWED BY **Lisa Mann**

of the dominant ego is not beautiful in disagreement and suggests understanding values, perceptions and personal preferences for a more beautiful disagreement.

Because this book assumes no prior knowledge, starting right at the beginning, there is very little here for the academic. However, in terms of bringing psychology to society this is a user-friendly, easy read.

Throughout, De Bono argues that physical beauty is nothing without a beautiful mind. He really empowers the reader to believe that anyone can have such a beautiful mind, because it is a learnt skill in thinking and not innate intelligence.

■ *Lisa Mann is a trainee forensic psychologist at HMP/YOI Norwich.*

A hopeful outlook

DE Silva and Rachman's third edition of *Obsessive Compulsive Disorder* brings in new material so that it reflects up-to-date information on this relatively common anxiety disorder. The book begins with an exploration of what constitutes OCD and the common problems associated with this disorder, including general anxiety, low mood and frustration. Emphasis is placed not so much on the presence of obsessions and compulsions but on the degree to which they cause distress or interfere with the person's life. Interesting parallels are drawn between OCD and other psychological disorders. New to the third edition are fascinating sections on scrupulosity, culture and mental pollution, as well as a new chapter on OCD in children.

The impacts of OCD on different domains of life are considered, with particular attention drawn to the strain on family and married life. An alarming case illustration is presented of a mother of a teenage daughter with OCD, demonstrating



Obsessive Compulsive Disorder: The Facts (3rd edition)

PADMAL DE SILVA & STANLEY RACHMAN

OXFORD: OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS; 2004; Pb £12.99 (ISBN 0 19 852082 4)

REVIEWED BY **Nicola Ann Cogan**

how family members are often made to undergo all sorts of restrictions within their family lives. The authors also point out that with severe cases of OCD the social and occupational effects of the disorder can be incapacitating.

A brief yet detailed overview of theories and explanations of OCD is presented, highlighting that there is no single theory that offers a comprehensive account. Instead it is likely that different aspects of the problem require different explanations, whether from a learning-theory, cognitive-behavioural or biological perspective.

Perhaps more encouraging to the reader is the fact that the development of effective treatment techniques has far outpaced current understandings of

causality. A comprehensive overview of diverse treatment options is presented, drawing attention to the effectiveness of psychological approaches. A useful summary of drugs used in treatment is also included, and practical advice concerning seeking help and self-treatment is offered.

This book is accessible to the general public with its easy-to-read style and well-structured chapters. Given that the overall tone is one of hope for individuals with OCD, the book offers an invaluable resource to patients, their families and service providers.

■ *Dr Nicola Ann Cogan is a trainee clinical psychologist at the Royal Edinburgh Hospital.*

A hit on sporting behaviour

RECENTLY we have had the 10th anniversary of that infamous lunge by Eric Cantona at a supporter of the rival team, a national newspaper complaining about soccer players' behaviour 'seeping into the sewer', the leader of a teachers' union criticising footballers for the example they give our impressionable pupils, and of course we still have ongoing soccer hooliganism. In this timely book John Kerr sets himself the difficult task of analysing all aspects of violence and aggression in sport today and making suggestions for change. Not only that, but he deftly explains the complexities of reversal theory, a general psychological theory of motivation, and applies it to a myriad different sporting situations with a clarity borne of conviction. All in 150 pages too!



Rethinking Aggression and Violence in Sport

JOHN H. KERR

ABINGDON: ROUTLEDGE; 2004; Pb £22.99 (ISBN 0 415 28664 6)

REVIEWED BY **Michael Ford**

After shearing away the woolly definitions of the past, Kerr defines four types of aggression and violence exhibited in players, spectators and riots: anger, thrill, power and play. However, people do not stay in the same mode – they switch, or reverse, between them – and Kerr uses this fact to illustrate not only how and why the behaviour of sports people can suddenly change but also how young athletes should in future be trained. Violence in team contact sports is of course sanctioned in order to provide excitement,

but a major problem is that of unsanctioned aggression. Kerr manages to suggest solutions to this whilst discussing the moral issues as well.

Despite having 'Sport' in its title, this exciting and illuminating book should be read by all psychologists for its fascinating insights into aggression and violence. Kerr certainly does not pull his punches.

■ *Dr Michael Ford is a Chartered Educational Psychologist enjoying early retirement.*